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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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EPA ORDERS RESPONSIBLE PARTIES TO CONTINUE CLEANUP AT MASTER METALS SITE

CHICAGO (Feb. 6, 2003) — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 has ordered a group of responsible parties to proceed with the final phase of cleanup at the Master Metals site, 4700 - 4740 E. Nevada Ave., in Detroit.

On Feb. 5, EPA sent a unilateral administrative order to the group of 11 companies demanding that they develop a work plan to remove concrete and contaminated soil, and then backfill with clean soil at the site.

"Our patience with the responsible parties is at an end," said Regional Administrator Tom Skinner. "Area residents deserve to have the site cleaned up quickly. If the responsible parties do not respond immediately, EPA will start the work without them, and it will cost the parties a lot more." Under the Superfund statute, if EPA does the work, responsible parties may be charged for up to three times the final cost.

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EPA's first request to the responsible parties was made on July 22, 2002, and allowed the group until October 18 to provide a good faith offer. No offer to perform the final phase of cleanup was received.

On a separate track from the on-site cleanup work, EPA will soon announce details of its intention to further sample residential and other areas near the Master Metals site. This work will be coordinated with state and local agencies.

About the Master Metals site

A lead smelter operated at the 1.8-acre site, under a series of owners, from about 1955 to 1984. Previously, from June 1998 to November 1999, the responsible parties conducted an initial \$400,000 cleanup project at the site under EPA oversight. This project included removal and disposal of the smelter building, air pollution-control baghouse, three underground storage tanks, and 1,690 cubic yards of soil containing high lead levels. After the initial work, the responsible parties conducted an engineering study and developed a range of options for the final phase of cleanup. The order issued yesterday requires the group to proceed with the cleanup plan selected by EPA.

In a completely unrelated matter, EPA Region 5 is also involved in the cleanup of another site called Master Metals in Cleveland.

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